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Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

234 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6460
Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, Chairman
Rep. Christopher Smith, Co-Chairman

Contact: Chadwick R. Gore
1-202-225-1901
e-mail: CGORE@HR.HOUSE.GOV

D'Amato says: "Poland and The Baltic States Should Be Admitted to NATO First"

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**Contact: Chadwick R. Gore
(202) 225-1901**

Washington, DC—"Let me make this perfectly clear: Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia should be admitted in the first round of NATO enlargement," said Commission Chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-C-NY) as he closed yesterday's Helsinki Commission first-in-a-series hearing on NATO enlargement. Testifying before Commission Chairman D'Amato, Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) and Commissioner Rep. Jon Christensen (R-NE) were Ambassadors Jerzy Kozminski of the Republic Poland, Dr. Alfonsas Eidintas of the Republic of Lithuania, Grigore-Kalev Stoicescu of the Republic of Estonia, and Ojars Kalnins of the Republic of Latvia.

"We've come very far in a short period of time. Who would have thought that we would be here discussing this in the mid-80's? Let me make it clear—I am a supporter of NATO enlargement," said Chairman D'Amato. "I think that, in principle, every candidate state should be included in NATO when they meet the standards for accession. I do not believe that NATO enlargement should end with the Madrid announcement. It is very important that the United States, and our NATO allies, make very clear to those states not invited to join in the first round that the door is not closed, that the process has

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not ended, and that we and our allies encourage them to press ahead to meet the standards so they can join when they are ready. Otherwise we run the risk of cutting the legs out from under the reform movements just now taking control of some of the eastern Europe.”

“It is my opinion, which I believe is widely shared, is that Russia should not have a veto over NATO enlargement, that no state’s admission should be conditional or held hostage to the wishes or designs of another. The enlargement of NATO is a victory for enlightenment, for freedom, for people exercising their choices and increasing their security—not a defeat for any other state, especially Russia.”

Mr. Smith reiterated the basic theme of the hearing saying, “I am a supporter of NATO enlargement. NATO enlargement provides an excellent opportunity for countries desiring membership to demonstrate their commitment to the Alliance’s shared values—including respect for human rights—as well as their ability to fulfill the military and political obligations expected of all member states. The prospect of NATO membership has already given important impetus to the reform process underway in most of the countries in the region and has contributed to the resolution of a number of long-standing disputes. I commend the people of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland for the impressive progress they have made in such a short time.”

The full texts of the statements of all hearing participants are available from the Commission.